

September 3, 2008

Ms. Marlene Dortch, Secretary  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
445 12th Street, ST  
Washington, DC 20554

On behalf of NorCal Services for Deaf & Hard of Hearing, a non-profit community-based organization, and its Board of Directors, I am writing to express our strong support for the applications filed by Sprint Nextel Corporation (Sprint) and Clearwire Corporation (Clearwire).

The consumers NorCal serves are deaf and hard of hearing individuals of all ages and colors, residing in 24 northeastern counties in California. Our unique communication needs are imperative in today's era of innovative designs and products. Many of the consumers we serve, live in the northern rural parts still without broadband access, and/or stuck with a single company offering broadband services, controlling the internet environment in such areas. One particular company is currently viewed by our consumer population as attempting to hold us hostage when they informed their customers that it will be enforcing a "cap" to its bandwidth usage. This is not acceptable! This in itself represents a serious concern to the community who uses internet-based relay services and such news actually appears to hinder our access to newer telecommunications opportunities over the internet, i.e., Video Relay and Internet text relay services. The FCC should only approve all inclusive "forward thinking" applications and reject any company moving in a direction which would be restricting bandwidth usage, going opposite of functional equivalency in telecommunications for deaf and hard of hearing users.

All the more reason why you should definitely support the applications from Sprint and Clearwire, as it's proposed open broadband network will create further opportunities to overcome the

great digital divide, breaking down the barriers of access for deaf and hard of hearing individuals who wish to be independent using newer and better mobile technologies such as Sprint-Clearwire's proposed mobile 2.5G WiMAX. New communication modes, with competitive pricing, and open network will create freedom needed for our population, as well as any and all who live in the rural parts of our nation, rather than be dependant on one company, "controlling and setting caps".

Last but not least, Sprint's credibility and integrity has a lot to do with their own outstanding team of dedicated employees, and managers, many whom are Deaf, and are whom we can count on to provide ongoing input once FCC approves this application. Sprints employees communication needs are also dependent on the right technology along with over 30 million Americans who are deaf and hard of hearing, and whom constantly strives to achieve the right functional equivalent mechanism to assist us in our goal of equal communication access in all aspects of telecommunications.

I trust that the Commission will approve any company who has deaf and hard of hearing consumers in their minds at the start (rather than "after the fact") of any merge, design of its products, and this exciting first open wireless broadband network.

Thank you,

Sheri A. Farinha, CEO  
NorCal Services for Deaf & Hard of Hearing  
Sacramento, California

